

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) An authentication processing and information storing apparatus performing requester authentication processing and storing thereon an owner's personal information, comprising:

a personal information storing section storing thereon the owner's personal information which is to be disclosed to a plurality of predetermined accessible persons, wherein at least one of the plurality of predetermined accessible persons is someone other than the owner;

an accessible person information storing section storing thereon accessible person characteristic information indicating a physical characteristic of each of the plurality of accessible persons;

a requester authentication section [[for]] receiving requester characteristic information indicating a physical characteristic of a requester who requests the personal information, and [[for]] performing authentication processing of the requester using the requester characteristic information and the accessible person characteristic information stored on said accessible person information storing section;

an access level setting section [[for]] setting an access level, which is a level of the personal information to be disclosed to the requester, when said requester authentication section authenticates the requester as the accessible person; and

a personal information output section [[for]] outputting a part of the personal information stored on said personal information storing section to the requester in accordance with the access level set-up by said access level setting section.

2. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an access level storing section storing thereon a personal information level, which is a level of the personal information to be disclosed to the accessible person, in association with each of the plurality of the accessible persons, wherein

said access level setting section sets the access level to the personal information level corresponding to the accessible person when said requester authentication section authenticates the requester as the accessible person.

3. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an access level storing section storing thereon a personal information level, which is a level of the personal information to be disclosed to the accessible person, and an authentication criterion, which is strictness of the authentication to be performed when the personal information within the personal information level is disclosed, in association with each other, wherein

said access level setting section determines the personal information level corresponding to the authentication criterion as at least a part of the access level when said requester authentication section authenticates the requester by the authentication criterion or a criterion stricter than the authentication criterion.

4. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein said requester authentication section receives the authentication criterion from said access level storing section, the authentication criterion corresponding to the personal information level for the personal information requested from the requester, and said requester authentication section performs authentication processing of the requester by the authentication criterion.

5. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein

said access level storing section stores the plurality of personal information levels and also stores a lower limit of credibility of the authentication as the authentication criterion corresponding to each of the personal information levels,

said requester authentication section outputs the credibility of the authentication for the requester based on the result of the comparison of the requester characteristic information with the accessible person characteristic information, and

said access level setting section selects the personal information level of which the lower limit of the corresponding credibility is less than the credibility of the authentication output by said requester authentication section, and sets the access level to the sum of the selected personal information levels.

6. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein

said access level storing section stores the personal information level and the authentication criterion in association with a title of the requester,

said requester authentication section further receives the title of the requester from a belonging of the requester, and performs authentication processing of the requester using the authentication criterion by reading the authentication criterion corresponding to the received title from said access level storing section, and

said access level setting section sets the access level to the personal information level corresponding to the title of the requester when said requester authentication section authenticates the requester as the accessible person.

7. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein

said accessible person information storing section stores a plurality of accessible person characteristic information of each of the accessible persons,

said requester authentication section receives a plurality of requester characteristic information, and performs authentication processing of the requester using the plurality of accessible person characteristic information and the plurality of requester characteristic information.

| 8. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus
as claimed in claim 1, wherein the information storing apparatus is retained by the owner.

| 9. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus
as claimed in claim 1, wherein said requester authentication section employs face information as
the requester characteristic information and the accessible person characteristic information.

| 10. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus
as claimed in claim 1, further comprising an image capturing section for generating the requester
characteristic information by capturing an image of the requester.

| 11. (Currently amended) The authentication processing and information storing apparatus
as claimed in claim 1, wherein

 said requester authentication section receives the requester characteristic information
from a portable apparatus retained by the requester, and

 said personal information output section outputs the personal information to the portable
apparatus retained by the requester and causes the portable apparatus to store the personal
information.

| 12. (Currently Amended) An authentication processing and information storing apparatus
performing requester authentication processing and storing thereon an owner's personal
information, comprising:

 a personal information storing section storing thereon the owner's personal information
which is to be disclosed to a plurality of predetermined accessible persons, wherein at least one
of the plurality of predetermined accessible persons is someone other than the owner;

 an authentication processing section, which is a requester authentication section [[for]]
performing authentication processing of the requester using requester characteristic information
indicating a physical characteristic of the requester, said authentication processing section
receiving a title of the requester from a belonging of the requester, and performing the

authentication processing by a predetermined strictness of the authentication corresponding to the title;

| an access level setting section [[for]] setting a level of the personal information to be disclosed to the requester to a level of the personal information predetermined corresponding to the title when the requester authentication section authenticates the requester as the accessible person; and

| a personal information output section [[for]] outputting a part of the personal information stored on said personal information storing section to the requester in accordance with the access level set-up by said access level setting section.

13. (Previously presented) A method for authenticating a requester of personal information, comprising:

storing personal information of a first person, wherein portions of the personal information are respectively associated with a plurality of levels of accessibility;

storing accessor characteristic information of at least one predetermined accessor of the personal information, wherein at least one of the at least one predetermined accessor is someone other than the first person; and wherein the characteristic information indicates at least a physical characteristic of each of the at least one predetermined accessor;

receiving requester characteristic information indicating a physical characteristic of a requester who is requesting access to the personal information;

authenticating the requester by determining whether the requester is one of the at least one predetermined accessors based on the requester characteristic information and the stored accessor characteristic information;

setting an access level for the requester indicating the level of the personal information which the requester is authorized to access; and

allowing the requester to access a portion of the personal information corresponding to the access level set for the requester.

14. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 13, wherein the at least one predetermined accessor includes a plurality of predetermined accessors, and the method further comprises:

storing a level of the personal information in association with each of the plurality of predetermined accessors, indicating the level of the personal information which each of the plurality of predetermined accessors is authorized to access;

setting an access level for the requester based on the stored level associated with the predetermined accessor whose accessor characteristic information corresponds to the requester characteristic information.

15. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 13, further comprising:

storing an authentication criterion in association with each of the plurality of levels of the personal information, the authentication criterion indicating a strictness of the authentication to be performed when a requester requests access to a portion of the personal information corresponding to a particular level; and

setting an access level for the requester as the level corresponding to the authentication criterion when the requester is authenticated at a strictness level corresponding to the authentication criterion or a criterion stricter than the authentication criterion.

16. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the requester is authenticated according to the authentication criterion associated with the level corresponding to the portion of the personal information being requested by the requester.

17. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the authentication criterion corresponds to a minimum correlation between the accessor characteristic information and the requester characteristic information for which the requester will be granted access to the level of the personal information associated with the authentication criterion.

18. (Previously presented) The method as claimed in claim 15, further comprising:
 - storing a level of the personal information and an authentication criterion in association with a title of the requester,
 - receiving the title of the requester from a belonging of the requester;
 - authenticating the requester based on the authentication criterion associated with the received title; and
 - setting the access level of the requester as the level of the personal information associated with the received title when the requester has been authenticated.